



Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes

Held on

Wednesday, 12 November 2025 at 9:00 am

In Simeon Lord Room, Esk Library Building

19 Heap Street | Esk



1 OPENING PROCEDURES

Present

Cr Jason Wendt	Mayor
Cr Helen Brieschke	Deputy Mayor
Cr Michael Bishop	Councillor
Cr Brett Freese	Councillor
Cr Tiara Hurley	Councillor
Cr Sally Jess	Councillor
Cr Steph Laycock	Councillor

Mr J Andrew	Director Operations
Mr L Hannan	Director Planning and Development
Mrs D Gregory	Chief Financial Officer (Attendance via Teams)
Mrs K Jones	Director HR and Customer Service
Mr D Rowe	Director Corporate and Community Services
Mrs H Golinski	Minute Secretary / Executive Assistant
Mrs M Janke	Communications Manager

Observer

Mr G Love	Engineering Services Manager
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Absent

Mr A Johnson	Chief Executive Officer
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1.1 Opening of Meeting

The Mayor, Cr Jason Wendt opened the meeting at 9.01am.

1.2 Leave of absence

Nil

Noting the Chief Executive Officer was representing Somerset Regional Council at the Australian Local Government Association Road Congress and unable to attend the meeting. The Chief Executive Officer delegated to the Director Planning and Development to oversee the meeting progress and recording of the minutes.

1.3 Confirmation of Previous Minutes

Resolution	Moved: Cr Bishop	Seconded: Cr Hurley
THAT the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held Wednesday 29 October 2025 as circulated to all members of Council be confirmed.		
<i>CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY</i>		

1.4 Business arising out of minutes of previous meeting

Nil

1.5 Declarations of Interest

Cr Jess declared an Interest in Agenda Item 10.1 - Rating Objection.

2 MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

2.1 Mayor and Councillors' Reports

- Cr Brieschke**
- Saturday 15 November is Council's Free Tree day at Fernvale Community Hall, 8.00 – 11.00 am.
 - Esk Hospital Auxiliary will host the screening of Grease at Toogoolawah Pictures as part of their yearly fundraising program, 6.30 pm.

Meetings/Functions attended:
October

29 Council Ordinary meeting
Retirement afternoon tea for the Local State Emergency Service Controller

November

- 01 Free Tree Day, Esk
- 02 Esk State Primary School 150th Anniversary
- 04 Visit to Esk and SES Depot, Esk following hailstorm
- 10 Artist Chat on Ukrainian Art
- 11 Bomb Shelter application assessment, The Condensery
Somerset Social Plan Advisory meeting, Esk
Esk Recreation Grounds Advisory meeting, Esk

Cr Bishop

Coming up on 29 November is the Somerset Regional Council Community Development Conference. This is a first for the Somerset Regional Council and it's very important that we promote this through the community and look to build the capacity of our community groups no matter what type of organisation they are. Please encourage the local groups to attend. Part of the Conference will be the Community Awards Ceremony, I want to encourage all our groups to nominate and I look forward to seeing them in attendance at the Conference.

Last week I had the privilege of representing Council in Canberra. I really enjoyed the experience and I was able to advocate for the Somerset Region to nine members of parliament across both sides of the Parliament.

The community is still talking a lot about the recent Esk Hail Storm and I wanted to thank the Community for looking after their neighbours and remind people to reach out to Council should they require assistance. Our Region will be prone to natural disasters and it's very important that we work together to get through them.

Cr Hurley

It has been a busy few weeks in our region and we have been privileged to attend school awards at both Toogoolawah and Kilcoy High School's with Lowood High School awards being held on Monday 17 November. Attending these awards allows us to see how many bright young people we have in our region who excel in public speaking and academically and could potentially be future leaders in our region or beyond. Therefore, I propose that the Council explore options as part of our next strategic plans for creating a Youth Advisory Council, which would empower young people in our region to express their views and influence the future of Somerset. This initiative will not only give youth a meaningful platform to articulate their needs and concerns but also promote active citizenship and community engagement. By addressing unique challenges faced by young residents, such as education and

mental health, the council can develop relevant programs and policies that reflect their aspirations. Learning from successful models in other communities, we can ensure that our local governance is inclusive and responsive.

Cr Freese

- Our final Free Tree Day for 2025 is on Saturday, 15 November at the Fernvale Community Hall from 8 – 11am
- Esk Hospital Auxillary Fundraiser is on Saturday night at the Toogoolawah Pictures with the screening of the classic musical Grease. Make sure you come dressed in your best Grease gear with prizes up for grabs. There will be a bar and snackbar available. All funds go to the Esk Hospital Auxillary.
- Somerset Christmas Lights Competition is now open. Entries close 26 November
- Come and Chat at Linville on Wednesday, 19 November from 10am
- The Villenvue Rural Fire Brigade is having a community recruitment evening on 19 November from 7pm.
- Coominya Christmas Carnival is on the evening of Saturday, 22 November

Councillor report:

- Spooky Somerset – Friday, 31 October at Clock Park Lowood – Congratulations to everyone involved in this wonderful event. It was so well organised and well attended. The costumes were amazing! Will be even better when our Green Core is a reality.
- Free Tree Day – Saturday, 1 November at Somerset Civic Centre
- Esk State School celebrated its 150th anniversary on Saturday, 1 November. The official part of the day recognizing the anniversary was a huge success with many past students and guests attending. The Historical display was incredible. I would like to extend a big thank you to everyone involved, especially the P&C, in staging such a wonderful event. I would also like to thank everyone involved in attending to the aftermath of the storm that hit the carnival that afternoon. It was a very challenging situation and everyone did their best to deal with the effects of the storm.
- Near North Coast Subchamber Showgirl and Rural Ambassador Finals Saturday, 8 November. The Mayor and I attended this event hosted by the Kilcoy Show Society at the Memorial Hall. All the

contestants were inspiring and are to be congratulated. We wish the winner all the best when they represent that region at the 2026 Ekka.

Cr Jess

Matters of Interest
November

- 13 Make & Create: Beginner Cross Stitch, Toogoolawah Library
- 15 Esk Hospital Auxiliary Movie Night, Alexandra Hall
- 19 Toogoolawah
Councillor Community Chat, Linville
Learn & Grow: Anna's War with Di Taylor, Kilcoy Library

Councillor Report
November

- 01 Free Tree Day, Esk
- 05 Esk State School 150th Anniversary
- 07 Councillor Community Chat, Kilcoy
- 11 Pretty Little Things Art Exhibition, Glen Rock Gallery
Remembrance Day, Esk

Cr Laycock

Councillors Report
November

- 01 Esk Free Tree Event
Esk State School 150th Fete

After a quiet time period due to a preexisting injury repair I am looking forward to the end of year celebrations that are to come.

Mayor Wendt

As Cr Bishop mentioned, the CEO and I joined him in Canberra last week, meeting with Minister McBain's advisor to advocate for future funding opportunities for the Lowood Futures, Kilcoy Revitalisation Project, and the Brisbane Valley Highway. We also took the opportunity to raise concerns about the discontinuation of the BOM Enviromon software, the negative impact this will have on local government, and the need for BOM to provide an alternative service to Local government at no cost beyond 30 June 2026. We also had a meeting planned with Minister King's office that was cancelled at the last minute, due to illness.

Before heading to Canberra, Mayor Milligan, a member of the water collaborative, the CEO, and I also looked at some recycled water projects in Adelaide and Newcastle. The projects have been going on for

several years. It was two days of looking at many projects and hopping on and off planes. The recycled water project is a big project. Lockyer and Somerset Regions constitute about one-third of the fresh food produced in Queensland. It's a really important food bowl area, and we want to solidify that as the region grows. It will be really important to keep water for agriculture and water for people to drink in the future.

The Caboonbah Undenominational Church celebrated 120 years on the weekend. A big congratulations to that small group on successfully keep such a great asset running for that period of time.

The other thing I wanted to mention was the Bureau of Meteorology released a notice of a G3-G4 Geomagnetic storm in the upper atmosphere. This won't impact anything physically however it may impact reception until the storm passes.

Resolution**Moved: Cr Hurley****Seconded: Cr Jess**

That the Mayor and Councillors verbal and written reports be received.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

2.2 Receipt of Petition

Nil

3 GENERAL**3.1 Meetings authorised by Council**

Nil

3.2 Consideration of notified motions

Nil

3.3 Reception of Notices of Motion for next meeting

Nil

3.4 Items for reports for future meetings

Nil

RECEPTION AND CONSIDERATION OF OFFICERS' REPORTS

4 PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Grant Funding Opportunity – Lowood RSL Monument

Resolution **Moved: Cr Brieschke** **Seconded: Cr Hurley**

THAT Council:

1. authorise the Chief Executive Officer to submit a grant funding application to the Honouring our Veterans Grants Program for \$75,000 (Excl GST) and if successful, execute necessary Funding Agreements; and
2. prioritise Council's financial co-contribution as part of the 2026/27 Budget considerations.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

5 FINANCE

Nil

6 CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

6.1 2025 Somerset Garden Competition – Review

Resolution **Moved: Cr Bishop** **Seconded: Cr Jess**

THAT Council receive the 2025 Somerset Garden Competition – Post Competition Review and that the contents be noted.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

6.2 Applications for Permits to Occupy - Western Branch Road, Mount Stanley

Resolution

Moved: Cr Brieschke

Seconded: Cr Freese

THAT Council:

1. consent to the issuing of permits to occupy over Lot 20 and Lot 121 on CSH2173, located on Western Branch Road, Mount Stanley; and
2. authorise the Chief Executive Officer to execute all documentation pertaining to this matter.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

6.3 Reconciliation Action Plan

Motion

Moved: Cr Bishop

Seconded: Cr Brieschke

THAT Council:

1. adopt the Reconciliation Action Plan (Attachment 1), conditional upon final endorsement from Reconciliation Australia, and
2. authorise the Chief Executive Officer to finalise any further reasonable amendments to the Reconciliation Action Plan as requested by Reconciliation Australia.

As the amendment is considered minor and remains consistent with the officer's recommendation, there was no need for a statement of reasons as outlined in Section 254H of the *Local Government Regulation*.

Amendment

Moved: Cr Wendt

Seconded: Cr Hurley

THAT Council:

1. adopt the Reconciliation Action Plan (Attachment 1), conditional upon final endorsement from Reconciliation Australia, and

2. authorise the Chief Executive Officer to finalise any further reasonable amendments to the Reconciliation Action Plan. ~~as requested by Reconciliation Australia.~~

CARRIED

Resolution	Moved: Cr Wendt	Seconded: Cr Hurley
THAT Council:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. adopt the Reconciliation Action Plan (Attachment 1), conditional upon final endorsement from Reconciliation Australia, and 2. authorise the Chief Executive Officer to finalise any further reasonable amendments to the Reconciliation Action Plan. 		
<i>CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY</i>		

6.4 Brisbane Valley Rail Trail Users Association Australia Day Bike Ride Event – Sponsor Request

Resolution	Moved: Cr Hurley	Seconded: Cr Brieschke
THAT Council provide sponsorship of \$3,000 and value-in-kind support to the ninth annual Brisbane Valley Rail Trail Australia Day Bike Ride event to be held on Monday, 26 January 2026.		
<i>CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY</i>		

6.5 22nd Annual Somerset Rail Trail Classic - Post Event Review

Resolution	Moved: Cr Hurley	Seconded: Cr Laycock
THAT Council:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. receive the 22nd Annual Somerset Rail Trail Classic – Post Event Review and the contents be noted; 		

2. endorse proposals 1 to 6, to be applied in planning for the 23rd Annual Somerset Rail Trail Classic; and
3. endorse officers to undertake a viability review of the event in conjunction with the 23rd Annual Somerset Rail Trail Classic Review.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

7 OPERATIONS

7.1 Kilcoy RSL Grant Application Support Request

Resolution Moved: Cr Hurley Seconded: Cr Brieschke

THAT Council provide the Returned Services League of Queensland Kilcoy Sub Branch Inc with a letter of support for the Avenue of Honour grant application.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

7.2 Park Event - The Lions Club of Esk Inc - Light Up Esk Christmas Tree

Resolution Moved: Cr Bishop Seconded: Cr Brieschke

THAT Council grant approval under Council's Local Law No. 1 (Administration) 2011 and Subordinate Local Law No. 1.14 (Undertaking Regulated Activities on Local Government Controlled areas and Roads 2011) to the Lions Club of Esk Inc to hold the annual Light up Esk event in Esk Memorial Park on Saturday, 29 November 2025 subject to conditions.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

7.3 Recycling Baskets in Somerset Regional Council Parks

Resolution Moved: Cr Jess Seconded: Cr Brieschke

THAT Council approve implementation of a six-month pilot program in four Council parks, by installing recycling baskets next to all general waste bins in those parks.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

7.4 Trax Christian Church request for temporary partial closure of car park for Community Christmas Carols

Resolution

Moved: Cr Hurley

Seconded: Cr Bishop

THAT Council grant approval under Council's Local Law No. 1 (Administration) 2011 and Subordinate Local Law No. 1.14 (Undertaking Regulated Activities on Local Government Controlled areas and Roads 2011) the partial closure of Walters Street car park on Saturday, 29 November 2025 from 4pm to 9pm and Friday, 5 December 2025 from 4pm to 9pm to hold Christmas Carols subject to conditions.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

8 HR AND CUSTOMER SERVICE

Nil

9 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

9.1 Excellence Bursaries Report - September 2025

Resolution

Moved: Cr Brieschke

Seconded: Cr Hurley

THAT Council receive the report of the Awarded Somerset Excellence Bursaries for the month of September 2025.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

9.2 Operational Plan 2025 - 2026 Review Quarter One

Resolution

Moved: Cr Jess

Seconded: Cr Freese

THAT Council receive the Operational Plan 2025-2026 First Quarter review and note the progress of the action items within the Plan.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

10 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

Declarable Conflict of Interest - Cr Jess

I inform this meeting I have a **declarable** conflict of interest in this matter (as defined in section 150EN of the *Local Government Act 2009*.)

This **declarable** conflict of interest arises in agenda item **10.1 - Rating Objection** because arises because a related party of mine may have a financial interest in this matter.

I propose to leave and stay away from the place where the meeting is being held while this matter is discussed and voted on.

Cr Jess left the meeting at 9.56 AM.

Resolution **Moved: Cr Hurley** **Seconded: Cr Laycock**

THAT Council in accordance with Section 254J(3)(g) move into a closed session at 9.56AM to discuss agenda item 10.1 - Rating Objection.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Resolution **Moved: Cr Freese** **Seconded: Cr Hurley**

THAT Council move out of a closed session at 10.07 AM and be once again open to the public.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

10.1 Rating Objection

Resolution **Moved: Cr Hurley** **Seconded: Cr Brieschke**

THAT the Chief Executive Officer be delegated authority to instruct Council's solicitors to accept the offer from the owner of assessment 34889-50000-000 and to take all

action necessary to settle the proceedings, including but not limited to, negotiating, making, amending and signing the precise terms and conditions for settlement.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Cr Jess returned to the meeting at 10.10 AM.

11 CLOSURE OF MEETING

There being no further business, the Mayor, Cr Jason Wendt closed the meeting at 10.10AM.

Somerset Regional Council

RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

November 2025 - May 2027

For more information
(07) 5424 4000
mail@somerset.qld.gov.au
somerset.qld.gov.au



Artist profile

Jennifer Kent is a First Nations Artist with a diverse multicultural heritage. Jennifer acquired a love for painting and arts when she attended boarding school at Shalom Christian College during the 1990s however did not start professionally painting until 2017. Jennifer has First Nations sovereign heritage from South East and Central Queensland and shares kinship with sovereign peoples from the North West Queensland regions.



Artwork story

This artwork celebrates the Somerset region's vital role as a source of life-giving water and home to rich biodiversity. Koala prints symbolise the carers of Country, *djarra*, who nurture the rivers and restore balance through their care for native species.

Bunya pine nuts embody wisdom, knowledge and truth, while five yellow box gum flowers represent Council's Corporate Values: Positive Interactions, Community Champions, Empowered Workforce, Safety Star and Excellence.

Together, these elements reflect Council's collaboration with Traditional Custodians and First Nations communities through the Reconciliation Action Plan.



Smoking ceremony with Jinibara Dance Troupe
Somerset NAIDOC celebrations 2025



Acknowledgment of Traditional Custodians

Somerset Regional Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the Country on which we live and work, the Jinibara, Jagera, Yuggera, Ugarapul, Kabi Kabi and Dungibara Peoples.

Further, we embrace and promote the Somerset region's heritage to incorporate all cultures, their beliefs and aspirations.



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Message from Reconciliation Australia

Reconciliation Australia welcomes Somerset Regional Council to the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program with the formal endorsement of its inaugural Reflect RAP.

Somerset Regional Council joins a network of more than 3,000 corporate, government, and not-for-profit organisations that have made a formal commitment to reconciliation through the RAP program.

Since 2006, RAPs have provided a framework for organisations to leverage their structures and diverse spheres of influence to support the national reconciliation movement. The program's potential for impact is greater than ever, with over 5.5 million people now working or studying in an organisation with a RAP.

The four RAP types — Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate — allow RAP partners to continuously develop and strengthen reconciliation commitments in new ways. This Reflect RAP will lay the foundations, priming the workplace for future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives.

The RAP program's strength is its framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities, allowing an organisation to strategically set its reconciliation commitments in line with its own business objectives, for the most effective outcomes. These outcomes contribute towards the five dimensions of reconciliation: race relations; equality and equity; institutional integrity; unity; and historical acceptance. It is critical to not only uphold all five dimensions of reconciliation, but also increase awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge, and leadership across all sectors of Australian society.

This Reflect RAP enables Somerset Regional Council to deepen its understanding of its sphere of influence and the unique contribution it can make to lead progress across the five dimensions. Getting these first steps right will ensure the sustainability of future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives, and provide meaningful impact toward Australia's reconciliation journey.

Congratulations Somerset Regional Council, welcome to the RAP program, and I look forward to following your reconciliation journey in the years to come.

KAREN MUNDINE
Chief Executive Officer, Reconciliation Australia



Message from the Mayor

Somerset Regional Council is a unique local government in South East Queensland in that it has the largest land area but the smallest population. We are surrounded by three city councils and five other regional and coastal councils.

Our vast local government area is home to Traditional Custodians, the Jinibara, Jagera, Yuggera, Ugarapul, Kabi Kabi and Dungibara Peoples. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, in 2021 Somerset was home to an estimated 1,358 First Nations people, about 5.35% of Somerset's population.

As a Council, we are dedicated to serving all of our people and preserving the cultures and traditions of people who have come before. Having a Reconciliation Action Plan means Council will better align its corporate and operational plans to ensure greater connections with Traditional Custodians.

This connection will allow more opportunity for First Nations voices to inform decision making for Somerset's future. Traditional Custodians have an unwavering connection to this land, their cultures and communities and their insight is invaluable for Somerset Regional Council.

Through this Reconciliation Action Plan, Council aims to strengthen relationships between First Nations peoples, non-Indigenous residents and Council, allowing all parties to make meaningful and positive change.

For Council's part, there are a range of actions involved, including inviting First Nations people to interagency meetings and community events, supporting the Emerging Elders Camp, growing Council's First Nations Sport and Recreation Program in the region's high schools, and educating people about First Nations cultures through our Somerset Libraries event program.

We will also work to improve relationships with Elders and First Nations teams from all government departments and non-government services which support our region.

I thank the Traditional Custodians for sharing their land, stories and voices with us.

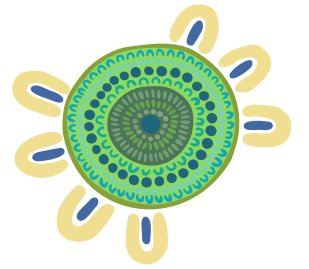
This plan is another step on our path to reconciliation. Council is committed to working with Traditional Custodians and our community to continue this journey.

Jason Wendt

JASON WENDT
Mayor, Somerset Regional Council



Our organisation



Somerset Regional Council area is an hour west of Brisbane. It has strong agricultural, environmental, heritage and tourism values. It contains important vegetation and forest, areas of high scenic and landscape amenity and significantly, and the key water catchments for South East Queensland with the headwaters of the Brisbane River. The Somerset region has an area of 5382 square kilometres and includes five major townships: Esk, Fernvale, Kilcoy, Lowood and Toogoolawah. The region is home to approximately 25,000 people and is expected to grow to an estimated 34,500 by 2031.

Recognising Council does not have large towns, similar to neighbouring regional Councils, it provides services with a much lower annual rate revenue. Council is often reliant upon grants to help provide the necessary infrastructure for the growing region. Council is responsible for the maintenance of local infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, parks, council-owned sporting facilities and swimming pools, libraries, visitor information centres, cultural and community buildings as well as its offices in Esk, Kilcoy and Lowood. It is also responsible for the management of waste and other environmental services and provides building inspection and town planning services. It supports the Somerset community through provision of activities, events, library services and by advocacy to other levels of government to improve the health and lives of residents.

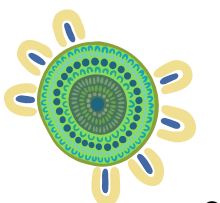
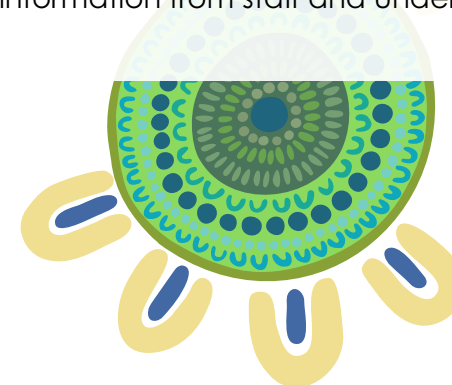
Council's vision encapsulates the community's aspirations to live in a prosperous region defined by the quality of its natural environment, the strength of its economy, the wellbeing of its people and its quality lifestyle.

The Somerset region, with its unique identity and proud heritage, is vibrant, cohesive and connected, providing the foundations for a prosperous rural lifestyle.

Somerset Regional Council's mission statement sets out the purpose of the organisation and demonstrates how it will achieve the vision:

To provide leadership in making locally-responsive and informed decisions, focusing on our customer's needs to deliver the highest-quality efficient services and facilities to all communities of the Somerset region.

Somerset Regional Council employs about 240 staff dedicated to serving the growing region. The majority of staff operate from the Council Administration Office at Esk, with other staff based in the various towns, including Kilcoy, Lowood, Toogoolawah and Fernvale. Historically, Council has not obtained from staff details of their cultural heritage, including if staff identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person, however, to better understand and support workplace diversity, Council plans to seek more demographic information from staff and understand this information in a culturally sensitive way.





Our Reconciliation Action Plan

Council wishes to implement a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) to provide a pathway toward continual cultural improvement and ensure greater connections with Traditional Custodians to inform decision-making.

Through its networks and relationships Council interacts with all levels of government, suppliers, business, organisations, community groups and individuals and recognises the significant role that it can play in progressing reconciliation throughout our community.

To commence this journey, Council will reflect on current practices and gradually integrate new processes into Council's corporate and operational plans. Council recognises it needs to address internal practices as a first step.

Council is committed to reconciliation. It is in preliminary stages, over the last two years Council has commenced building relationships with Traditional Custodians in our region. Council will continue to consult with Traditional Custodians, First Nations staff and Elders who reside in our region to increase Council's understanding of First Nations cultures and traditions so they can be incorporated into facets of Council's internal operations and external activities, including events.

Our RAP Champion is the Director Corporate and Community Services. We are developing a Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group which will include members of the executive team and representatives from all sections of Council's workforce, including First Nations staff who express an interest in becoming a member of the group. Deliverables will be reported to the entire team to ensure reconciliation becomes part of business as usual and everyone's responsibility.

Our partnerships and current activities

Council is consulting with Traditional Custodians, the Jinibara and Jagera Peoples, in relation to the development of hiking trails on Mount Glen Rock, Esk. As the land was previously privately owned, Council is keen to ensure the area is treated with care until the cultural heritage study is completed. Upon completion, Council will ensure the development proceeds in a manner sensitive to identified cultural needs.

Council works with Elders from the Jinibara People who have a successful Native Title claim over the north-eastern part of the region to provide Welcome to Country and cultural activities at community events and festivals. Council does this to build relationships with the Jinibara People, with the aim of raising residents' awareness of Traditional Custodians' unwavering connection to this land, their cultures and communities.

Council's Community Development team have a working relationship with the First Nations teams from Metro North Health, Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, ECT Ltd and Services Australia and work with First Nations organisations Kambu Health and Institute for Urban Indigenous Health (IUIH).

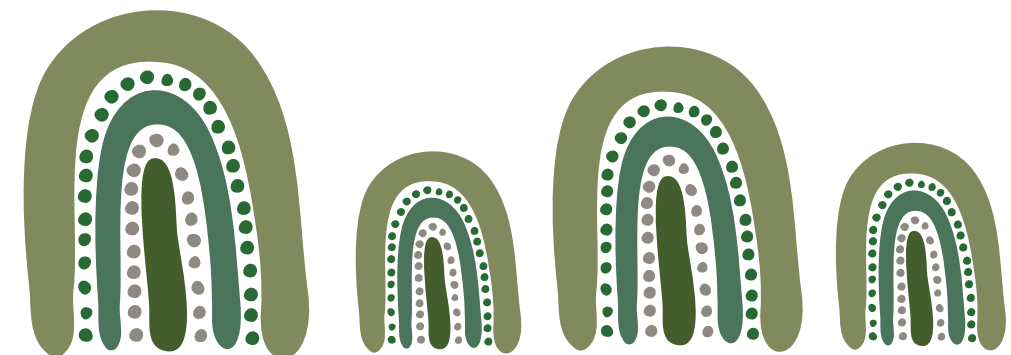
The First Nations teams are invited to participate at interagency meetings and community activities and any First Nations person is encouraged to provide a cultural lens to discussions and activities. At Interagency meetings, preference is given to a First Nations person to provide a Welcome to Country where they hold cultural authority over Country. If a Traditional Custodian is not available, or the person does not feel comfortable to provide a Welcome to Country, another person will be asked to provide an Acknowledgement of Country, and if no other member wants to share their Acknowledgement of Country, the chair will commence the meeting with an Acknowledgement of Country.

Council libraries include an Acknowledgement of Country in their Storytime activities and offer NAIDOC activities each year. In 2025 activities include creative workshops including dot pot painting and jewellery making enabling participants to gain a deeper understanding of rich traditions and more understanding into the significance of symbols, colours and patterns. These are led by First Nations artists who live in neighbouring regions. The activities are supported by two library staff who identify as strong First Nations women. These activities are funded by Council. Council also supports other NAIDOC activities held at schools within the region. Council's Community Development team work with First Nations resident and teacher to bring three primary schools together to share a day of cultural learnings. It is also common for this team to attend school-led activities at the Lowood State High School.

Council supports the local Emerging Elders Camp by sponsoring a bus to ensure First Nations young people can attend. At the 2025 camp 37 First Nations young people attended from the three high schools within the Somerset region.

Council's Sports and Recreation Team have successfully developed a First Nations Sport and Recreation Program, funded by the Queensland Government. The program was piloted in 2024 at Lowood State High School and then extended to Somerset's three high schools in 2025. All three programs aim to increase physical activity levels of First Nations students. This year Lowood is participating in rugby league, with the other high schools engaging in basketball. As well as learning the sport and receiving a ball each to keep (provided by Council) the students are mentored by First Nations Instructors from Moreton Bay Suns and Ipswich Force.

Council has a First Nations Somerset resident on its Social Plan Advisory Committee. Expressions of interest are advertised and two community members are selected from a diverse range of interested persons. Although not mandatory, Council was pleased to receive interest from this First Nations community member, who has brought a wealth of knowledge and cultural lens to the discussion. Positions are held for two years before being re-advertised and there is nothing to prevent a sitting member re-applying.

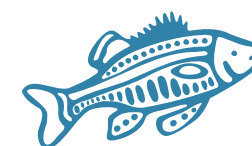


Relationships



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Establish and strengthen mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations within our local area or sphere of influence.	November 2025	Director Corporate and Community Services, Community and Tourism Manager, Community Development Coordinator
	Research best practice and principles that support partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and organisations.	November 2025	Community and Tourism Manager, Community Development Coordinator
Build relationships through celebrating National Reconciliation Week (NRW).	Circulate Reconciliation Australia's NRW resources and reconciliation materials to our staff.	June 2026	Director Human Resources and Customer Service
	RAP Working Group members to participate in an external NRW event.	June, 2026	Chairperson of Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group
	Encourage and support staff and senior leaders to participate in at least one external event to recognise and celebrate NRW.	27 May - 3 June, 2026	Chief Executive Officer

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Promote reconciliation through our sphere of influence.	Communicate our commitment to reconciliation to all staff.	November 2025	Chief Executive Officer
	Identify external stakeholders that our organisation can engage with on our reconciliation journey.	November 2025	Director Corporate and Community Services, Community and Tourism Manager, Community Development Coordinator
	Identify RAP and other like-minded organisations that we could approach to collaborate with on our reconciliation journey.	November 2025	Director Corporate and Community Services, Community and Tourism Manager, Community Development Coordinator
Promote positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies.	Research best practice and policies in areas of race relations and anti-discrimination.	December 2025	Director Human Resources and Customer Service
	Conduct a review of HR policies and procedures to identify existing anti-discrimination provisions, and future needs.	March 2026	Director Human Resources and Customer Service



Respect



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Increase understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights through cultural learning.	Develop a business case for increasing understanding, value and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, knowledge and rights within our organisation.	March 2026	Director Human Resources and Customer Service and Director Corporate and Community Services
	Conduct a review of cultural learning needs within our organisation.	March 2026	Director Human Resources and Customer Service and Director Corporate and Community Services
Demonstrate respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by observing cultural protocols.	Develop an understanding of the local Traditional Owners or Custodians of the lands and waters within our organisation's operational area.	November 2025	Director Corporate and Community Services
	Increase staff's understanding of the purpose and significance behind cultural protocols, including Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country protocols.	November 2025	Chief Executive Officer and Director Human Resources and Customer Service

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories by celebrating NAIDOC Week.	Raise awareness and share information amongst our staff about the meaning of NAIDOC Week.	June 2026	Chief Executive Officer and Director Human Resources and Customer Service
	Introduce our staff to NAIDOC Week by promoting external events in our local area.	June 2026	Chief Executive Officer and Director Human Resources and Customer Service
	RAP Working Group to participate in an external NAIDOC Week event.	First week of July, 2026	Chairperson of RAP Working Group

Opportunities



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Improve employment outcomes by increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruitment, retention and professional development.	Develop a business case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment within our organisation.	March 2026	Director Human Resources and Customer Service
	Build understanding of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffing to inform future employment and professional development opportunities.	March 2026	Director Human Resources and Customer Service
Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity to support improved economic and social outcomes.	Develop a business case for procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses.	May 2026	Director Corporate and Community Services and Chief Financial Officer
	Investigate Supply Nation membership.	May 2026	Senior Procurement Officer



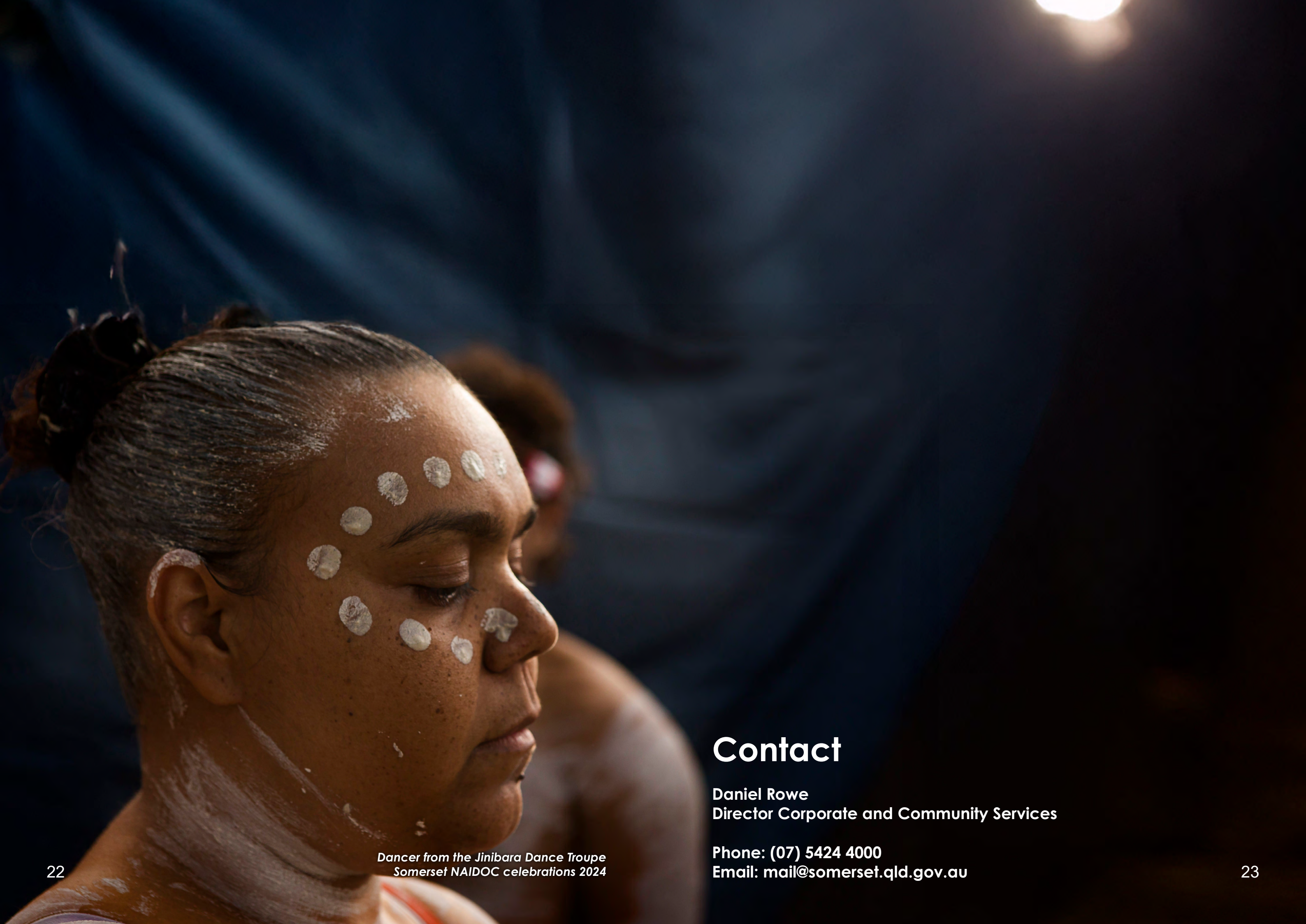
First Nations exhibition 2021
The Condensery - Somerset Regional Art Gallery

Governance



Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Establish and maintain an effective RAP Working Group (RWG) to drive governance of the RAP.	Form a RWG to govern RAP implementation.	December 2025	Director Human Resources and Customer Service and Director Corporate and Community Services
	Draft a Terms of Reference for the RWG.	December 2025	Director Human Resources and Customer Service and Director Corporate and Community Services
	Establish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation on the RWG.	December 2025	Director Human Resources and Customer Service and Director Corporate and Community Services

Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Responsibility
Provide appropriate support for effective implementation of RAP commitments.	Define resource needs for RAP implementation.	December 2025	Director Corporate and Community Services
	Engage senior leaders in the delivery of RAP commitments.	December 2025	Chief Executive Officer
	Appoint a senior leader to champion our RAP internally.	December 2025	Chief Executive Officer
	Define appropriate systems and capability to track, measure and report on RAP commitments.	December 2025	Director of Corporate and Community Services
Build accountability and transparency through reporting RAP achievements, challenges and learnings both internally and externally.	Contact Reconciliation Australia to verify our primary and secondary contact details are up to date, ensuring we do not miss out on important RAP correspondence.	June annually	Executive Assistant to the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer
	Contact Reconciliation Australia to request our unique link, to access the online RAP Impact Survey.	1 August annually	Executive Assistant to the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer
	Complete and submit the annual RAP Impact Survey to Reconciliation Australia.	30 September annually	Chief Executive Officer
Continue our reconciliation journey by developing our next RAP.	Register via Reconciliation Australia's website to begin developing our next RAP.	May 2027	Director of Corporate and Community Services



*Dancer from the Jinibara Dance Troupe
Somerset NAIDOC celebrations 2024*

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